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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE _3_ MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on _28 May 2008_.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**.   2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) _1-36_ is/are pending in the application.

     4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) _1-36_ is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

     Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

     Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

     a)☐ All   b)☐ Some *   c)☐ None of:

       1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

       2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

       3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

    * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1)☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2)☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3)☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
     Paper No(s)/Mail Date _18 June 2008_.

4)☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
     Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .

5)☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application

6)☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1.   This non-final Office action is in response to Amendment in Reply to Action filed on 28 May 2008.

2.   Claims 1-36 have been amended.

3.   Claims 1-36 are currently pending and have been examined.

4.   This office action has been made non-final in order to address a new grounds of rejection under 35 U.S.C. 101.

Response to Amendment

5.   The Objections to the Claims in the previous office action is withdrawn in response to Applicant's amendments to the apparatus claims.

6.   Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being incomplete for omitting essential elements.   The Applicants have properly amended Claim 12 and the rejection is withdrawn.

Response to Arguments

7.   Applicant's arguments filed 30 May 2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

8.   Applicant submits that Du et al. (Du) (U.S. 6,041,306) does not teach in amended Claims 1 and 23: (1) *accepting first and second workflows into the first tier of the multi-tiered workflow model* [Remarks, page 12, first paragraph], (2) *adding ordering tasks to the combined workflow, the ordering tasks being operable to implement the order of the combined workflow* [Remarks, page 12, first paragraph], (3) *abstracting the first and second workflows in a second tier of the multi-tiered model to provide respective first and second abstracted workflow views, the first workflow view including a first plurality of grouping of the first plurality of tasks, and the second workflow*

view including a second plurality of groupings of the second plurality of tasks [Remarks, page 12, second paragraph], and, (4) *ordering the first plurality of groupings and the second plurality of groupings into a combined workflow in a third tier of the multi-tiered workflow model* [Remarks, page 12, second paragraph].

9.   With respect to argument (1), the Examiner respectfully disagrees. Du teaches *accepting first and second* (f1, f2) *workflows* (workflow process **18**) *into the first tier* (c1) *of the multi-tiered workflow model* (multiple activities potentially performed in parallel, "superstructure") (see at least column 4, lines 34-51 and Figure 5).

10.   With respect to argument (2), the Examiner respectfully disagrees. Du teaches *adding ordering tasks* (work nodes) *to the combined workflow* (parallel workflow actions) (see at least column 3, lines 44-55)*, the ordering tasks being operable to implement* (executes the associated process (forward) activity) *the order of the combined workflow (*see at least column 7, lines 14-21 and Figure 5).

11.   With respect to argument (3), the Examiner respectfully disagrees. Du teaches *abstracting the first and second workflows* (two groups (modeled as two work nodes a1 and a2)) *in a second tier* (c1) *of the multi-tiered model to provide respective first and second abstracted workflow views* (product design project)*, the first workflow view* (see Figure 5) *including a first plurality of grouping* (mechanical component) *of the first plurality of tasks, and the second workflow view including a second plurality of groupings* (electrical component, two design groups, modeled as two work nodes a1 and a2) *of the second plurality of tasks* (see at least column 8, lines 22-59).

12.   With respect to argument (4), the Examiner respectfully disagrees. Du teaches (4) *ordering the first plurality of groupings and the second plurality of groupings* (the two groups) *into a combined workflow* (work nodes, product design project) *in a third tier* (c2) *of the multi-tiered workflow model* (merging it with the other component design in the action database) (see at least column 6, lines 38-64 and column 8, lines 22-59 and Figure 5).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

13.   35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

14.   Claims 1-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

15.   Claims 1-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 based on Supreme Court precedent, and recent Federal Circuit decisions, the Office's guidance to examiners is that a § 101 process must (1) be tied to another statutory class (such as a particular apparatus) or (2) transform underlying subject matter (such as an article or materials) to a different state or thing. Diamond v. Diehr, 450 U.S. 175, 184 (1981); Parker v. Flook, 437 U.S. 584, 588 n.9 (1978); Gottschalk v. Benson, 409 U.S. 63, 70 (1972); Cochrane v. Deener, 94 U.S. 780,787-88 (1876).

An example of a method claim that would not qualify as a statutory process would be a claim that recited purely mental steps. Thus, to qualify as a § 101 statutory process, the claim should positively recite the other statutory class (the thing or product) to which it is tied, for example by identifying the apparatus that accomplishes the method steps, or positively recite the subject matter that is being transformed, for example by identifying the material that is being changed to a different state. Here, applicant's method steps, fail the first prong of the new Federal Circuit decision since they are not tied to another statutory class and can be preformed without the use of a particular apparatus. Thus, claims 1-22 are non-statutory since they may be performed within the human mind.

16.   Claims 1-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because Claims 1 and 23 recite steps for building

a combined workflow but do not produce useful, concrete and tangible results.

Under the statutory requirement of 35 U.S.C. § 101, a claimed invention must produce a useful,

concrete, and tangible result. For a claim to be useful, it must yield a result that is specific,

substantial, and credible (MPEP § 2107). A concrete result is one that is substantially repeatable,

i.e., it produces substantially the same result over and over again (*In re Swartz, 232 F.3d 862,*

864, 56 USPQ2d 1703, 1704 (Fed. Cir. 2000)). In order to be tangible, a claimed invention must

set forth a practical application that generates a real-world result, i.e., the claim must be more

than a mere abstraction (*Benson, 409 U.S. at 71-72, 175 USPQ at 676-77*). (Please refer to the

"Interim Guidelines for Examination of Patent Applications for Patent Subject Matter Eligibility" for

further explanation of the statutory requirement of 35 U.S.C. § 101.)

The claims do not produce a useful result because the claims do not provide a specific utility. Per

MPEP 2107.01 A, a specific utility is "specific to the subject matter claimed and can "provide a

well-defined and particular benefit to the public."" As the claims are currently recited, they seem

to apply to the general problem of workflow management for a business collaboration result, but

fail to disclose a more specific utility for the business collaboration.

The claims are not concrete because one of ordinary skill in the art would not be able to repeat

the steps and produce the same tangible results as the abstracting, ordering and adding steps

could be performed by different individuals and achieve different outcomes since it is not clear

what the scope is of achieving a desired business collaboration.

The claims do not produce tangible results because the claims just solve for ordering tasks to a

combined workflow, but do not actually assign any results of achieving a desired business

collaboration. Claims 2-22 and 24-36 are also rejected for the same reasons since they depend

from Claims 1 and 23.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

17.   The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for

the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or
in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for
patent in the United States.

18.   Claims 1-14 and 23-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Du et al (Du)

(U.S. 6,041,306).

With regard to Claims 1 and 23, Du teaches *a method and apparatus of building a*

combined workflow (a workflow process management (WFPM) system 10 implemented in a

network 11 of computer systems, being accomplished by computer software) (see at least column

4, lines 9-33) *comprising:*

- *accepting a first workflow* (each workflow process **18**) *into a first tier* (c1) *of a*

  multi-tiered workflow model (multiple activities potentially performed in parallel,

  "superstructure"), *the first workflow comprising a first plurality of tasks* (sequence

  of activities or action) *and being associated with a first party* (an associated user

  14a-b) (see at least column 4, lines 34-51 and Figure 5).

- *accepting a second workflow into the first tier of the multi-tiered workflow model*

  (multiple activities potentially performed in parallel, "superstructure"), *the second*

  workflow (each workflow process **18**) *comprising a second plurality of tasks*

  (sequence of activities or action) *and being associated with a second party* (an

  associated user14a-b) (see at least column 4, lines 34-51).

- *abstracting the first and second workflows* (two groups (modeled as two work nodes a1 and a2)) *in a second tier* (c1) *of the multi-tiered model to provide respective first and second abstracted workflow views* (product design project), *the first workflow view including a first plurality of grouping* (mechanical component) *of the first plurality of tasks, and the second workflow view including a second plurality of groupings* (electrical component) *of the second plurality of tasks* (see at least column 8, lines 22-59).

- *ordering the first plurality of groupings and the second plurality of groupings* (the two groups) *into a combined workflow* (work nodes, product design project) *in a third tier* (c3) *of the multi-tiered workflow model* (merging it with the other component design in the action database) (see at least column 6, lines 38-64 and column 8, lines 22-59 and Figure 5), *the combined workflow having a task order* (list of required changes) *that, when executed, provides a desired result of a business collaboration* (COMPLETE, INCOMPLETE) *between the first party and the second party* (with multiple activities potentially performed in parallel, overall product design) (see at least column 4, lines 45-48 and column 8, lines 22-59).

- *adding ordering tasks* (work nodes, two major components) *to the combined workflow, the ordering tasks being operable to implement the order of the combined workflow and thereby achieve the desired result* (modeled as work nodes a3 and a4, if it is complete, incomplete) (see at least column 6, lines 38-64 and column 8, lines 22-59 and Figure 5).

With regard to Claims 2 and 24, Du teaches *wherein adding ordering tasks comprises forming a sequential flow which interleaves implementation* (rule nodes) *of the first plurality of tasks and the second plurality of tasks* (workflow process **18**) (see at least column 6, line 38 through column 7, lines 1-24).

With regard to Claims 3 and 25, Du teaches *wherein adding ordering tasks comprises forming a parallel flow of a first task within the first plurality of tasks and a second task within the second plurality of tasks* (with multiple activities potentially performed in parallel) (see at least column 4, lines 45-56).

With regard to Claims 4 and 26, Du teaches *wherein adding ordering tasks comprises adding at least one of conjunctive* (Forward arcs) *splitting and joining tasks which specify the task order* (see at least column 6, lines 21-33).

With regard to Claims 5 and 27, Du teaches *wherein adding ordering tasks comprises adding at least one of alternative* (reset arcs) *splitting and joining tasks which specify the task order* (see at least column 6, line 21 through column 7, lines 1-24).

With regard to Claim 6, Du teaches *wherein adding ordering tasks comprises adding a first splitting task* (Initial **160**) *which designates that a first task within the first workflow is followed by a first following task* (Active **163**) *and a second following task* (Completed **178**, Compensation **171**) (see at least column 13, lines 19-29 and FIG. 9).

With regard to Claim 7, Du teaches *wherein adding ordering tasks comprises adding the first following task as a second task within the second workflow* (see at least column 13, lines 19-29 and FIG. 9).

With regard to Claim 8, Du teaches *wherein adding ordering tasks comprises adding the first following task as a first joining task* (Active state **163**), *the first joining task designating a second task within the second workflow as following the first joining task and the first splitting task* (Active state **163** or Compensation state **171**) (see at least column 13, lines 19-29 and FIG. 9).

With regard to Claim 9, Du teaches *wherein adding ordering tasks comprises adding a second splitting task* (Active **163**) *following the second task within the second workflow, the second splitting task designating that the second task is followed by a third following task* (Compensation **171**) and a fourth following task (Completed **178**, Suspended Compensation **175**) (see at least column 13, lines 19-63 and FIG. 9).

With regard to Claim 10, Du teaches *wherein adding ordering tasks comprises adding the third following task as the second following task, the second following task being a second joining task within the first workflow that designates that a third task within the first workflow follows the second following task* (suspended compensation states) (see at least column 13, lines 19-63 and FIG. 9).

With regard to Claim 11, Du teaches *wherein adding ordering tasks comprises adding the fourth following task* (Suspended Compensation **175**) *as a third joining task within the second workflow, the third joining task designating that a fourth task* (Completed **178**) *within the second workflow follows the third joining task and the third task within the first workflow* (see at least column 13, lines 19-63 and FIG. 9).

With regard to Claim 12, Du teaches *wherein a second ordering task is a joining task which designates a fourth task* (Suspended Compensation **175**) *within the second workflow, the fourth task following the second task within the combined workflow* (see at least column 13, lines 19-63 and FIG. 9).

With regard to Claim 13, Du teaches:

- *adding a third task* (Suspended Active **168**) *within the first workflow as the second following task* (see at least column 13, lines 19-63 and FIG. 9).

- *adding a second joining task within the first workflow as the third following task* (Compensation **171**), *the second joining task designating that a fourth task within the first workflow follows the third following task* (Active **163**, Completed **178**) (see at least column 13, lines 19-63 and FIG. 9).

With regard to Claims 14 and 28, Du teaches *wherein ordering the first plurality of tasks comprises inputting the task order from an operator* (workflow process designer 22a-c) (see at least column 5, line 48).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

19.   The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

20.   Claims 15-22 and 29-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Du as applied to claims 1-14 and 23-28 above, and further in view of Wil M.P. van der Aalst (Aalst), "Process-Oriented Architectures for Electronic Commerce and Interorganizational Workflow", Information Systems Vol. 24, No. 8, pp. 639-671, 1999.

With regard to Claims 15 and 29, Du teaches the method and apparatus above. Du does not specifically teach *representing the first workflow as a first matrix in which the first plurality of tasks are each represented as first vertices, where values of the first vertices within the first matrix are determined by first dependencies between the first plurality of tasks and representing the second workflow as a second matrix wherein each of the second plurality of tasks are represented as second vertices, where values of the second vertices within the second matrix are determined by second dependencies between the second plurality of tasks.* Aalst teaches process-oriented architectures for *representing the first workflow* (workflow) *as a first matrix* (tuple) *in which the first plurality of tasks* (tasks, T) *are each represented as first vertices, where values of the first vertices within the first matrix are determined by first dependencies between the first plurality of tasks* (b∈B, task_map(b)) *and representing the second workflow* (workflow) as a second matrix (tuple) wherein each of the second plurality of tasks (tasks,T) are represented as second vertices, where values of the second vertices within the second matrix are determined by second dependencies between the second plurality of tasks(b∈B, task_map(b)) in analogous art of global transaction support for workflow management systems for the purposes of, "…the business partners involved in the interorganizational workflow share a common description of the workflow process definition" (see at least pages 649-650, under heading 5.1. Definition of CT-IOWF).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the process-oriented architectures for electronic commerce and interorganizational workflow as taught by Aalst in the distributed workflow management system as disclosed by Du. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to do so for the benefit of load balancing or proactive reconfiguration of interorganizational workflow share (Aalst, pages 649-650, 5.1. Definition of CT-IOWF).

With regard to Claims 16 and 30, Du does not specifically teach *inserting the first matrix and the second matrix into a third matrix; modifying a selected value within the third matrix, thereby reflecting a construction or removal of a selected dependency between two vertices within the first plurality of tasks, consistent with the task order; adding a fourth vertex before a first of the two vertices, the fourth vertex having a first chosen value reflecting a first new dependency between the fourth vertex and the first of the two vertices; and adding a fifth vertex after the first of the two vertices, the fifth vertex having a second chosen value reflecting a second new dependency between the fifth vertex and the first of the two vertices.* Aalst teaches *inserting the first matrix and the second matrix into a third matrix* (tuple CL-IOWF = (B, WFsub1, WFsub2, …WFsubn, PsubM, send receive); *modifying a selected value within the third matrix* (m), *thereby reflecting a construction or removal of a selected dependency between two vertices within the first plurality of tasks, consistent with the task order; adding a fourth vertex before a first of the two vertices, the fourth vertex having a first chosen value reflecting a first new dependency between the fourth vertex and the first of the two vertices; and adding a fifth vertex after the first of the two vertices, the fifth vertex having a second chosen value reflecting a second new dependency between the fifth vertex and the first of the two vertices* ($m \in$ PsubM: send (m) (see at least pages 659-666) in analogous art of global transaction support for workflow management systems for the purposes of, "…a loosely coupled architecture (LCA)" (see at least pages 659-666, under heading, 6. LOOSELY COUPLED).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the process-oriented architectures for electronic commerce and interorganizational workflow as taught by Aalst in the distributed workflow management system as disclosed by Du. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to do so for the benefit of asynchronous partitioned workflows (Aalst, pages 659-666, under heading, 6. LOOSELY COUPLED).

With regard to Claims 17 and 31, Du does not specifically teach *wherein the first workflow is an abstracted workflow associated with a first actual workflow of the first party, and further wherein a confidential nature of the first actual workflow is protected by use of the abstracted workflow in constructing the combined workflow.* Aalst teaches *wherein the first workflow is an abstracted workflow associated with a first actual workflow of the first party, and further wherein a confidential nature of the first actual workflow is protected by use of the abstracted workflow in constructing the combined workflow* in analogous art of global transaction support for workflow management systems for the purposes of, "…projection inheritance conforms to hiding or abstracting from tasks new in x) (see page 655, third paragraph).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the process-oriented architectures for electronic commerce and interorganizational workflow as taught by Aalst in the distributed workflow management system as disclosed by Du. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to do so for the benefit of increased security or privacy between collaborative workflows (Aalst, page 655, third paragraph)

With regard to Claims 18 and 32, Du does not specifically teach *selecting a subset of the combined workflow for execution by the first party.* Aalst teaches *selecting a subset of the combined workflow for execution by the first party* in analogous art of global transaction support for workflow management systems for the purposes of, "The common workflow can be seen as a superclass and the local workflows can be seen as subclasses of this superclass" (see page 655, second paragraph).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the process-oriented architectures for electronic commerce and interorganizational workflow as taught by Aalst in the distributed workflow management system as disclosed by Du. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to do so for the benefit that inheritance notions could be useful (Aalst, page 655, second paragraph).

With regard to Claims 19 and 33, Du does not specifically teach *determining that the subset includes a third plurality of tasks, each consecutive pair of the third plurality of tasks connected by a dependency*. Aalst teaches *determining that the subset includes a third plurality of tasks, each consecutive pair of the third plurality of tasks connected by a dependency* in analogous art of global transaction support for workflow management systems for the purposes of, "...x can do what y can do with respect to the tasks present in y" (see page 655, third paragraph).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the process-oriented architectures for electronic commerce and interorganizational workflow as taught by Aalst in the distributed workflow management system as disclosed by Du. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to do so for the benefit that inheritance solves the problems encountered during adaptive workflows in a collaborative process (Aalst, page 655, first paragraph).

With regard to Claims 20 and 34, Du does not specifically teach *wherein selecting a subset comprises determining that a last task within the third plurality of tasks precedes at most one subsequent task within the combined workflow*. Aalst teaches *determining that a last task within the third plurality of tasks precedes at most one subsequent task within the combined workflow* in analogous art of global transaction support for workflow management systems for the purposes of, "...x can do what y can do with respect to the tasks present in y" (see page 655, third paragraph).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the process-oriented architectures for electronic commerce and interorganizational workflow as taught by Aalst in the distributed workflow management system as disclosed by Du. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to do so for the benefit of controlled task dependency during adaptive workflows in a collaborative process (Aalst, page 655, third paragraph).

With regard to Claims 21 and 35, Du does not specifically teach *determining that no internal task within the third plurality of tasks, exclusive of the last task, immediately precedes an external task that is not included within the third plurality of tasks*. Aalst teaches *determining that no internal task within the third plurality of tasks, exclusive of the last task, immediately precedes an external task that is not included within the third plurality of tasks* in analogous art of global transaction support for workflow management systems for the purposes of, "A trigger is an external condition which leads to the execution of an enabled task" (see at least page 653, first paragraph).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the process-oriented architectures for electronic commerce and interorganizational workflow as taught by Aalst in the distributed workflow management system as disclosed by Du. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to do so for the benefit of a control feature during adaptive workflows in a collaborative process (Aalst, page 655, first paragraph).

With respect to Claims 22 and 36, Du does not specifically teach *determining that no internal task within the third plurality of tasks, exclusive of a first task of the third plurality of tasks, immediately succeeds an external task that is not included within the third plurality of tasks*. Aalst teaches *determining that no internal task within the third plurality of tasks, exclusive of a first task of the third plurality of tasks, immediately succeeds an external task that is not included within the third plurality of tasks* in analogous art of global transaction support for workflow management systems for the purposes of, "For distinguishing x and y under protocol inheritance all tasks present in x but not in y are blocked. The new tasks are simply disallowed to be executed" (see at least page 655, third paragraph).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the process-oriented architectures for electronic commerce and interorganizational workflow as taught by Aalst in the distributed workflow management system as disclosed by Du. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to do so for the benefit of hiding or abstracting from new tasks in the external task (Aalst, page 655, third paragraph).

21.   Examiner's Note:

The invention, as disclosed in the instant application, is directed to building a combined workflow. The instant application may disclose patentable subject matter however not all of the disclosed potentially patentable subject matter is recited in the claims. An interview with the examiner may be productive.

Conclusion

22.   The following prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure:

- Notani (U.S. 6,006,193) discloses a computer executable workflow control system.
- Chen et al (U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0184070) discloses an inter-enterprise collaborative process management method and system.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to THOMAS MANSFIELD whose telephone number is (571)270-1904. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 8:30 am-6 pm, alt. Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Beth Van Doren Boswell can be reached on 571-272-6737. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/T. M./
Examiner, Art Unit 3623

2 September 2008
Thomas Mansfield
/Jonathan G. Sterrett/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3623